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ABSTRACT

A procedure used by a university-affiliated intensive English language program to mainstream students into regular academic courses is described. The program, affiliated with Southeast Missouri State University, includes traditional English-as-a-Second-Language courses with heavy emphasis on writing and reading skills, and courses in American culture, literature, history, and study skills, word processing, and listening and notetaking skills. Social and cultural activities are also integrated into the curriculum. The program schedule is from early June to late May, with flexible program length options. The report describes some of the academic preparation models currently used in other Missouri university intensive language programs, gives an overview of the program in question, explains procedures for student placement and scheduling, describes monitoring and record-keeping procedures, discusses communication between program faculty and university faculty teaching courses in which intensive English students are enrolled, and presents data on the feasibility of allowing intensive English students to enroll in regular credit-bearing university courses. (MSE)

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Mainstreaming Intensive English Students into Regular University Courses

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of TESOL

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March 11, 1989

by

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INTRODUCTION

In order to prepare international students for the rigors of American university life, an intensive English program is obliged to do more than merely raise the level of its students' language proficiency to the point where they can satisfy the entry requirements of the parent institution. Mindful of this, intensive English programs typically offer courses in American culture and study skills in addition to the language curriculum. Yet without first hand experience in dealing with uniquely American demands and expectations, international students often discover that, unlike in their home countries' universities, it is often far easier to enter an American university than it is to graduate.

This paper discusses a procedure employed by a university-affiliated intensive English program for mainstreaming its students into regular academic courses.

Part I of the presentation describes some of the models of academic preparation currently employed by other intensive English programs.

Part II provides an overview of how this program is designed to prepare its students for entry into the academic mainstream of the parent university.

Part III explains this program's precedures for placing students into appropriate university courses, with special emphasis upon criteria used in selecting type and number of courses per student.

Part IV deals with the development and implementation of monitoring and record-keeping procedures.

Part V discusses the need for opening and maintaining lines of communication with university faculty who teach courses in which intensive English students are enrolled.

In Part VI, data are presented to demonstrate the feasibility of allowing intensive English students to enroll in regular, credit-bearing university courses.

The presentation concludes with discussion and questions.

PART I: Models of Academic Preparation

In the state of Missouri, six universities offer intensive English programs to non-native speakers whose level of English language proficiency is judged to be inadequate for admission as full-time, regular students. As you can see from Figure 1 (below), policies on allowing intensive English students to take regular, credit-bearing university courses vary widely (Source: *English Language and Orientation Programs in the U.S. 1988.* Institute of International Education).

Figure 1. **Credit Options for Intensive English Students in Missouri**

University	Status
A	not allowed
B	TOEFL 450 at Advanced Level
C	at Advanced Level
D	in Art, Dance, Music, or Computer Studies
E	with permission of academic department
F	with Intensive Program Director's permission

Among those intensive programs allowing students to take credit-bearing university courses, the number of credit hours seems to be more uniform, ranging from 3 to 6 semester hours per academic term.

Clearly, then, the policy of allowing intensive English students to enroll in credit-bearing university courses is fairly university - at least in Missouri. But the type of participation allowed is far from uniform.

PART II: Overview of University Preparatory Education (UPE) at SEMO

UPE serves a student population that was almost exclusively Japanese but has recently expanded to include a sizeable proportion of French, Malaysian, and other nationalities. Since its inception, UPE enrollment has ranged from a high of 56 students to a low of 25 students, with enrollment for the year in which the figures used in

this paper were compiled (1987-1988) standing at approximately 40. The base program begins in early June and ends in late May, with provisions for early (end of first semester) graduation, as well as supplemental (summer) programs for those students not judged to be ready for full-tome university work at the end of the academic year.

Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) accepts UPE graduates on the recommendation of the Program Director, waiving the usual minimum requirement of 500 on the TOEFL. The Director's recommendations are based on a combination of factors, including student performance on a battery of standardized tests (foremost among them the MTELP and MTAC) and in UPE classes, UPE faculty recommendations based on judgments of affective qualities such as attitude and motivation, and the students' track records in regular university courses.

UPE curriculum includes traditional ESL courses with a heavy emphasis on writing and reading skills, as well as courses in American culture, literature, and history, study skills, word processing, and listening/notetaking skills.

Homestay families are provided for students arriving in June, and American roommates are provided in an international living unit during Fall and Spring semesters. UPE-approved social and cultural activities are also integrated into the UPE curriculum.

Thus, UPE attempts to provide its students with the language, academic, social, and survival skills necessary to compete with American students at the university level.

PART III: UPE Mainstreaming Procedures

A. Student Preparation

Students who enter the Program during the Summer session do not enroll in credit-bearing courses, as we feel they need time to become adjusted to their new study and social environments. Midway through the summer term, however, we ask our students to begin thinking about the kinds of university courses they might like to enroll in Fall semester.

Prior to the Fall term enrollment period, we devote class time to choosing courses and filling out enrollment cards properly. We closely monitor course selection, trying to match student strengths and interests with the appropriate credit-bearing course offerings. We also explain the enrollment procedure to students so they will know where to go and what to do when the time comes. UPE students are restricted to 100-level (Freshman) courses the first semester, and may only take upper-level courses later on if those courses have as their prerequisites 100-level courses students have already successfully completed.

We encourage all of our students to take at least one university course during Fall term, regardless of their level of English proficiency.

We also strongly recommend all students to take at least 3 semester hours of university credit courses Spring term. We have adopted this philosophy for the following reasons:

UPE student participation in university credit courses:

1. Provides students with insights into "real" university courses. Students experience firsthand the expectations, demands, instructional pacing, and style of university courses. Also, participation in university courses gives UPE students an objective yardstick to measure where they are in their English proficiency as opposed to where they need to be to succeed in university work;

2. Provides students with a sense of academic progress, so they won't feel all their time and effort have been "wasted" studying *"only"* English. UPE students can finish a 1 year intensive English program with 12 semester hours of university credit, as well as with an enhanced sense of confidence in their ability to do the job at the university level;

3. Provides UPE program administrators and faculty with information to help us in the process of deciding which of our students are ready for university work and which aren't. For borderline performers on standardized tests and in ESL coursework, a

record of success in university coursework can tip the scales in favor of recommendation.

B. Institutional Preparation

UPE has an agreement with the University allowing our students to take a maximum of 6 semester hours of credit-bearing courses per term. We pay our students' tuition, which amounts to $10 per semester hour. UPE students are classified as "high school/special" status students, and this special status must be updated every term.

The procedures for enrolling UPE students in university classes, which must be repeated every semester, are as follows:

1. A list of eligible UPE students, including ID #s, is compiled and delivered to the Bursar's Office. This is done for financial record-keeping purposes, as well as to obtain permission for a "fee waiver" to be entered into the University's computer files during the actual enrollment process.

2. The Bursar signs copies of the list. One copy goes to the Registrar to enter students into his records as "high school/special." A second copy goes to the Enrollment Office, so that the above-mentioned waiver can be entered into the University's computer files.

3. Students take their schedule cards to the Enrollment Center to register for courses.

PART IV: Monitoring/Feedback

The importance of offering support to regular university instructional staff to defuse potential negative feelings concerning the presence of students with limited English proficiency in their classes cannot be overemphasized. Instructional staff should not feel that UPE students have been "dumped" on them. To avoid these feelings of resentment, as well as to open and maintain lines of communication with the UPE program, the following procedure is followed:

1. During the first week of class, a letter of introduction is sent to all university instructional staff who have UPE students enrolled in their classes. This letter consists of an explanation of who the student is and what we at UPE are trying to accomplish, as well as an offer of our support and an invitation for questions and comments.

2. During the week prior to midterm examinations, we send out a letter of inquiry in regard to the progress of our students. In this letter, we ask that if a student appears to be in jeopardy of failing, we be informed as soon as possible, so that we can either provide supplemental assistance or, failing that, withdraw the student in advance of the deadline.

3. At the end of the semester, we send instructional staff a letter of appreciation, in which we remind them that their efforts have made a positive difference. We also express our hope that we can count on their future cooperation, and we solicit comments on how we

can improve on the quality and preparedness of UPE students we send to them in the future.

At the end of the term, we collect and collate performance data to assess how the program is proceeding. (See Part VI for a representative sample of student performance statistics)

PART V: Lines of Communication

At this point, I would like to reemphasize the importance of close monitoring of student progress, as well as close cooperation with participating university administration and instructional staff. In order to provide our students with an optimum learning environment, as well as to gain - and maintain - an edge in an ever-more competitive market for quality intensive English students, we feel that our program must offer more than standard instructional fare. We feel that our Mainstreaming program offers us such an advantage.

But in order for it to continue, UPE depends upon the goodwill of our University community. In brief, we need "positive P.R." to continue to offer - and improve - our Mainstreaming program.

PART VI: Data

PERFORMANCE DATA

Fall, 1987 Semester through Fall, 1988 Semester

Course	Credit	# Enrolled	Grade Range	Average Grade
Keyboarding	2	24	D-A	2.54
Physical Ed.	1	21	C-A	3.19
Mathematics*	3	16	C-A	3.00
Music (Vocal & Instrumental)	1-2	8	B-A	3.75
Art	3	7	C-B	2.71
Ag. Ed.	1-3	5	C-A	3.00
American Studies*	1-3	4	D-B	2.25
Foreign language	3	1	A	4.0
Intro to Broadcasting	3	1	B	3.0
Principles of Macroeconomics	3	1	D	1.0
Office Management	audit	1	-	-
Consumer Behavior	audit	1	-	-

Part VI: Data, cont.

Grade Distribution

	A's	B's	C's	D's	F's	Audits	Drops
Fall 87	9	14	11	0	0	0	6
Spr 88	9	15	4	3	0	0	9
Fall 88	4	10	8	1	0	2	4
Total:	22	39	23	4	0	2	19

Enrollment Data

Semester	Students Enrolled	Classes Completed	Classes Dropped	Credit Hrs Earned	G.P.A.
Fall 87	23	34	6	76	2.94
Spr 88	17	31	9	51	2.97
Fall 88	20	23	4	47	2.74
Total	60	88	19	174	2.92

UNIVERSITY CREDITS REPORT
UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY EDUCATION
SPRING, 1989

17 students had been enrolled by 12/7/88 in these 11 courses for the Spring semester, 1989:

Keyboarding/Basic Applications	1111
College Algebra	1
Beg. Swimming	11
Contemporary Business	1
Design Foundations	1
Drawing I	1111
Recreational Dance	11
American History I	11
World Religions	1
Racquetball 1st 8 weeks	1
Archery 2nd 8 weeks	1

On 1/30/89, 25 students were enrolled in these 17 classes:

Keyboarding/Basic Applications	111111
College Algebra	1111
Beg. Swimming	11
Contemporary Business	1
Drawing I	11111
Recreational Dance	11111
American History I	1
World Religions	1
Archery 2nd 8 weeks	1
Volleyball, 1st 8	1
Fund. of Interpersonal Communication	1

Adv. Judo	1
World Regional Geography	11
Prin. of Speedwriting	1
Econ. Problems Policy	1
Aerobic Dance	1
Tumbling/Trampoline	1

On 2/2/89, one student dropped Keyboarding, one dropped Recreational Dance, and one dropped Aerobic Dance.

On 2/28/89, 23 students were enrolled in these 16 classes for 71 total hours:

Keyboarding/Basic Applications	5
College Algebra	4
Beg. Swimming	2
Contemporary Business	1
Drawing I	5
Recreational Dance	4
American History I	1
World Religions	1
Archery 2nd 8 weeks	1
Volleyball, 1st 8	1
Fund. of Interpersonal Communication	1
Adv. Judo	1
World Regional Geography	2
Prin. of Speedwriting	1
Econ. Problems Policy	1
Tumbling/Trampoline	1